PANCHAYATI RAJ

NOVEMBER 1961

OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL, RURAL EXTENSION TRAINING CENTRE
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PANCHAYATI RAJ

(Incorporating Gram Sevak)

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GRAM SABHA—THE CORNER STONE

Vishnu Dutt

STEP BY STEP, but surely, the Pachayati Raj movement is not only gaining momentum but is getting into the desired direction. This is as it should be. The latest to emerge in the set-up are the Gram Sabhas as statutorily recognised ground level bodies. These along with village Panchayats will now constitute the solid foundations of the movement. Though their importance was recognised from the very beginning, yet it were the panchayats—their executive bodies which alone had held the field and had relegated the parent bodies to a somewhat secondary position. Some States had not even accorded statutory recognition to these bodies. But hardly an year had passed when their importance was realised. It was the last annual conference on Community Development and the conference of State Ministers on Panchayati Raj held at Hyderabad, that gave the clarion call to bring Gram Sabhas into their own.

Most of the States have already recognised Gram Sabhas as legal entities. The Panchayati Raj legislations in Mysore and Rajasthan though not recognising them as statutory bodies, provide that before a meeting of all adult residents of the village, the statement of accounts, the report on past achievement and the programme of work for the following year are to be read out. It is only in Kerala and Madras that these have not so far been statutorily recognised. It is expected that they will also follow suit in the near future.

If the aim of Panchayati Raj is to broaden democracy and establish people's mastery, it is only logical that the elected Panchayats should be made responsible to the entire adult population of the village constituting the Gram Sabha. Then only can we have a popular Government at the village level responsible to the people. Much in the same way, we have duly elected Governments at the State and Central levels which are answerable to the State Assemblies and the Lok Sabha. Without this element of the Government being responsible to the people's representatives we cannot have a truly democratic Government. The most creditable feature of the village panchayat is that it is responsible to the people themselves and is, therefore, the most representative and democratic form of Government.

BEST MENTOR

It has often been pointed out by the critics of Panchayati Raj and perhaps not without some justification that the village Panches are not entirely free from selfish motives, prejudices based on caste or religion and may, therefore, not act in the best interests of the community. In such circumstances, the Gram Sabha and not the Government officials or the higher Panchayati Raj bodies will prove their best mentors. The experience of States where the Sabhas are working properly, has shown that partiality in the distribution of loans and supplies and other malpractices by Panchayats have been reduced to the minimum. Even if they go astray sometimes, they get knocks from the Gram Sabhas and thus come back to the right path. This is the only practical way in which the panchayats can learn and make progress.

PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION

The involvement of the Gram Sabha in the planning and even execution of development schemes ensures people's active interest and support. To the extent Panchayati Raj is an instrument for getting popular participation, there cannot be a better device to achieve the goal than through the medium of active Gram Sabhas. If the Panchayats place before the Gram Sabhas their various schemes and explain to them their difficulties and

solutions they can easily win the latter's sympathy and co-operation. Worked out in this way even the knottiest problems like increasing panchayat's financial resources through taxation and other methods, improving agricultural production and looking after the interests of the weaker sections will lend themselves to an easy solution. Moreover, this instils a sense of social participation and purposefulness in the lives of individual villagers who otherwise would have remained passive spectators of the drama of Panchayati Raj being enacted before their very eyes. It is very useful to have important members of the Gram Sabha associated with various standing committees and entrust to them different schemes for implementation.

How often should the Gram Sabha meet? The Panchayati Raj legislations in various States prescribe one or two meetings only in a year. This may be sufficient for purposes of the formal sanctioning of the schemes and the budget for the new year. But obviously this is not enough to develop closer association of the people with the programme. It is desirable that the Gram Sabha should meet more frequently when routine and day-to-day matters like sanctioning of loans, seeds and other supplies may be disposed of. At such meetings, as many adult members of the village population may attend as is feasible and the condition of a quorum for the meeting may be waived. The utility of these meetings lies in that they provide a forum for the Panchayat to explain their policies and programmes to the village people and to enlist their cooperation. Chances of corruption, and nepotism are reduced when all the cases are put up before the public gaze. Experience of active and successful Gaon Sabhas like those operating in Srinagar Block in Rajasthan, seem to point to the same conclusion. In Srinagar Block, the Gaon Sabhas meet once every month when the Sarpanch who is a member of the Block Panchayat Samiti gives an account of the important decisions taken at the Samiti meetings and also informs the individual applicants whether or not the loans and supplies they had asked for, have been sanctioned to them. This ensures a speedy and effective disposal of the requirements of the villagers and leaves little room for doubts or suspicions against the panchayat members.

THE SIZE

The issue of the size of the Gram Sabhas is also very important. They should not be too big, otherwise the members will not have that intimate knowledge of each other which is essential for ensuring compactness and emotional integrity of the body. The bigger the size, the more difficult it is to expect unanimity in election of the Panches and harmonious working of the Panchayats. This fact has been corroborated by an Evaluation Study Team set up by the Rajasthan State Government to analyse the results of Panchayat elections in that State. These are some of the angularities which need to be straightened before one can expect Gram Sabhas to function as dynamic bodies adding weight and stature to the Panchayati Raj set-up.

PANCHAYATI RAJ IN RAJASTHAN AND ANDHRA

Below we publish summaries of the view points of two different sets of people who visited Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh recently. One of them is Miss Jean Joyce of the Ford Foundation who has been a close observer of the C.D. Programme throughout as it has unfolded itself during the last several years so that any comments and conclusions drawn by her are bound to be significant. The other group of visitors comprises of Messrs Harold Haffsommer and D. C. Dubey who have sought to carry out a sociological study of the programme from a few selected view-points.—Ed.

JEAN JOYCE

IN ANDHRA PRADESH

* The non-officials are taking a strong hand in running the blocks.
* Villages that had earlier been relatively neglected by block staff are now getting a fairer share of attention.
* The Panchayat Samitis want jurisdiction over the middle schools to maintain teacher and pupil attendance.
* Participation of the people in running their own local development is obviously increasing.
* The Block officers are coming into more direct touch with the villages and Sarpanches.
* While it is certainly difficult to say without considerably more careful and detailed study, it seems clear that the more favoured classes having more education, more land, more status and higher caste are chosen as functionaries in the new institutions.
* Development is concentrated still largely on physical targets.
* No Samiti has yet levied any duties and taxes other than the small professional and house taxes.
* The Block technical staff feels very uneasy in being made so closely and directly accountable to non-officials.
* The B.D.O's. strength vis-a-vis the Panchayat Samiti President is very crucial. There is need to balance the power and status of the Samiti President.

IN RAJASTHAN

* The Panchayats have received a tremendous new impetus.
* The Sarpanches and Panches have quickly felt the need to communicate directly with the people both to plan local programmes and to explain decisions reached for their village at the Samiti.
* Nearly all the Sarpanches and Panches report that their work-load has increased enormously.
* The B.D.O. has gained considerably new self-confidence because of the power of the public support behind him.
* The relationship between the Panchayat Samiti and its Standing Committees—particularly if the Committees should tend to abuse their power—will have to be more carefully spelt out.
* It is largely in the co-opting system that the political parties have been able to press forward their candidates.

HAROLD HOFFSOMMER AND D. C. DUBEY

* Apart from elections, the villagers have taken little part in the affairs of the Panchayat.
* Greater attention to the involvement of the rank and file of the people in Panchayati Raj is definitely indicated. In other words

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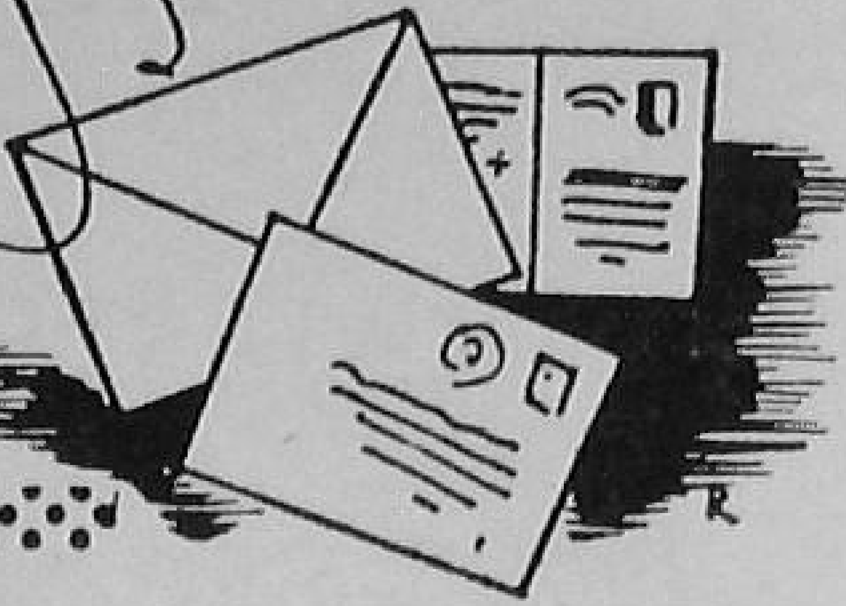
LETTERS



NEED FOR ORIENTING VILLAGE TEACHER'S TRAINING

Sir,

WITH THE implementation of the scheme of Democratic Decentralisation in many States of our country, change has become inevitable in the field of village teacher's training. It has necessitated a new type of outlook on the part of the village teachers. They are no longer simply classroom tutors, but are expected to be active village leaders. In order to be successful teachers they must have a complete working knowledge of the significant principles of education, practice of teaching, rural sociology, human relationship and action research programme for self-improvement. They must be imparted a clear understanding of the principles underlying this moral adventure of Democratic Decentralisation.

I suggest that the orientation programme must include the following :—

1. Complete knowledge of the scheme of Democratic Decentralisation—its origin; social, economic and spiritual philosophies uderlying it; progress of the scheme in different States.

2. Issues raised in the wake of Democratic Decentralisation.

3. Role of the village teacher in the Democratic Decentralisation set-up. How can he carry it out successfully ?

4. Knowledge of the principles and practices of Basic Education.

5. Dynamic ideas for revitalising the village school and village society.

6. Knowledge of the progress made by the country during the Ist and IInd Five Year Plans and programme of the IIIrd Five Year Plan.

It will be very beneficial if the Ministry of Community Development and Co-operation gets good guide books prepared on these lines for the village teachers under a suitable prize scheme. This will go a long way in helping thousands of our confused and ill-trained village teachers.

Dated 20-9-61 Yours etc.

Satya Pal Ruhela,
Research Fellow in Basic Education.
National Institute of Basic Education,
NEW DELHI

* * *

THE TURNHEADS

Sir,

While reading with interest the Panchayati Raj issue of August 1961 I read a letter "What Turns the Head" by Shri V. D. Malgavkar who complains about official apathy and indifferent behaviour of an official with members of the public. I agree with Shri Malgavkar and have sympathy with him. There are such types of officers in every Department of Government then why blame the Development Department alone for it ? On my part, I shall advise Shri Malgavakar to have patience. The dawn of new era is in sight. Our Prime Minister Shri Jawaharlal Nehru following the principle, "ARAM HARAM HAI", works hard for the uplift and the development of our Nation. Under his inspiring leadership, the Panchayati Raj will start functioning nearly in all the States in the near future. Let us hope that under that Raj all officers of the type complained of by Shri Malgavkar will be properly pulled up through Panchayat bodies of the citizens to be elected by the citizens for the citizens. One of the objectives of Panchayati Raj is to bring to book such "Turn

Head" officers who are stumbling blocks in the march of development of our country.

Dt. 25-9-61 Yours etc.

S. M. Yoonus

Stage I Block, Igatpuri,
Distt. Nasik,
Maharashtra.

* * *

PANCHAYATI RAJ OR GRAM SWARAJ

Sir,

I have gone through the letter of Shri R. K. Vepa, I.A.S., Sub-collector, published in 'Panchayati Raj' July, 1961 under the title "Panchtayati Raj or Rural Democracy". The Community Development Programme, aims at the individual and collective welfare of India's vast rural population. It is not merely meant for rural development as mentioned by Shri Vepa. Its objectives are to develop self-reliance in the individual and initiative in the village community. Naturally community thinking and collective action are encouraged through people's institutions like the Village Panchayats, Co-operative Societies, Vikas Mandals etc.

In 1959, the Government decided to delegate the responsibility, power and resources for planning and execution of the development programme to the people's istitutions in accordance with the recommendations of the Balwant Rai Mehta study team.

One of the directive principles in our constitution is that the States shall take steps to organise village panchayats and endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to work as units of Self-Government (Article 40). Mahatma Gandhi always emphasised the need of regeneration of these most useful institutions of old. Now in the new experiment the traditional democratic methods of working followed by the village panchayats have been extended to block and district levels. Hence "Panchayati Raj"—a new phrase suggested for this new experiment by our beloved Prime Minister Nehru not only indicates the rural bias of the experiment but reminds us of that golden and glorious past of our country in which panchayats played an important part in all spheres of village life. In the beginning, these institutions may have limited powers, may be subject to both official and non-official checks at all levels but in due course they are expected to be sovereign bodies of Self-Government.

So far as the question of a suitable label for this novel experiment is concerned, I do not think the phrase "Rural Democracy" suggested by Shri Vepa, is a sound one for democracy cannot be divided as rural and urban. Democracy is not merely a form of Government but it is a way of life and its fundamental principles are the same. Democratic Decentralization is a method or process by which Panchayati Raj or Gram Swaraj (word used by Mahatma Gandhi) is to be established—the ultimate ideal of which is "Ram Rajya".

Dt. 25-8-61 Yours etc.

B. N. Kulkarm

Gram Sevak
Refresher Training Centre,
Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh.

PANCHAYATI RAJ IN RAJASTHAN AND ANDHRA

(*continued from page* 3)

the place of Gram Sabha in the set-up is very vital.

* Approximately 26% of the traditional leaders are on the Panchayat.

* In general all family members vote for the same candidate.

* 70% of the respondents knew recent pertinent decisions made in their Panchayats.

* Panchayati Raj is generally accepted by the villagers not so much because they understand its objective and organisation, but because it has the power of Government and high authority behind it.

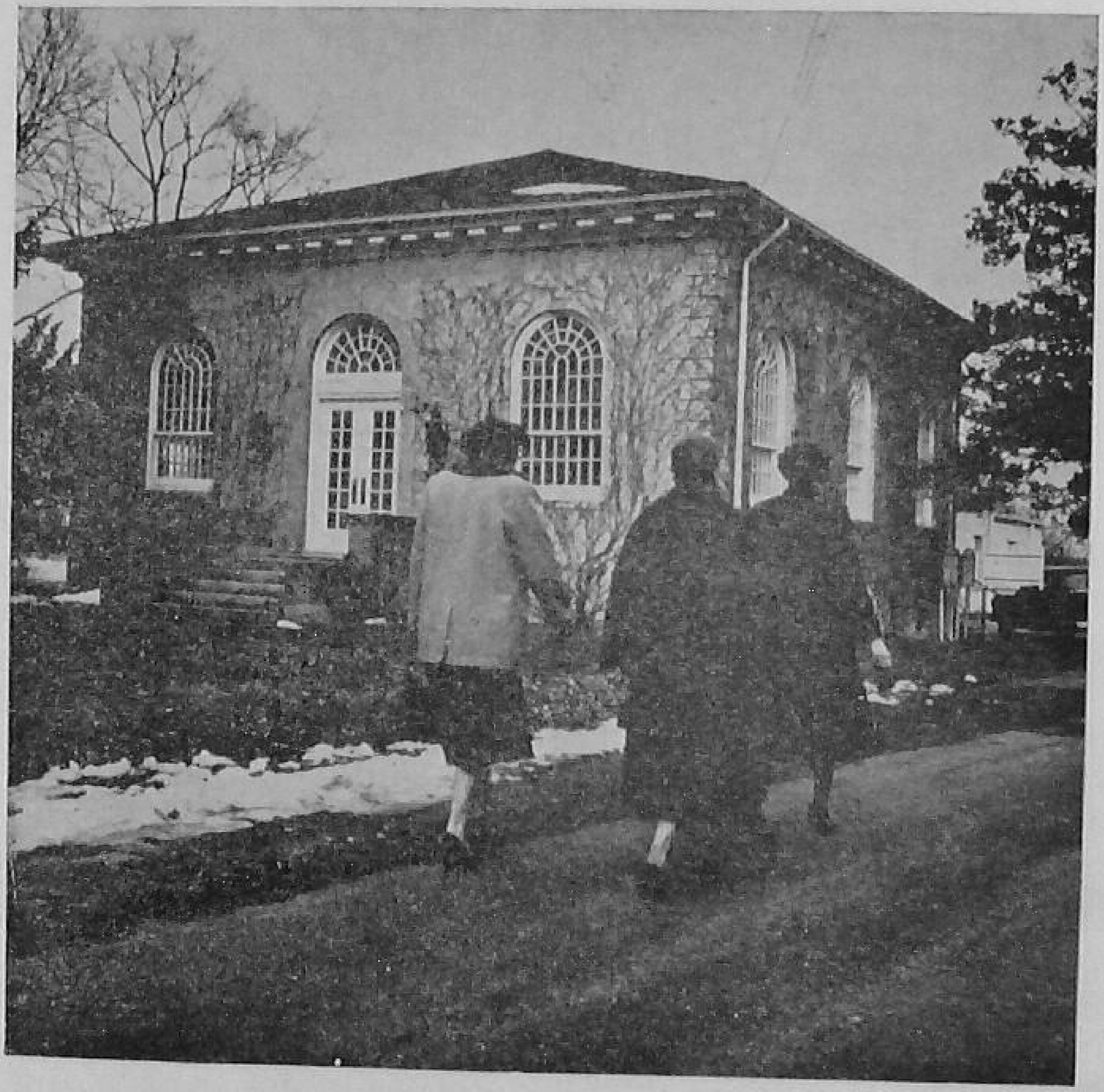
* A high proportion of the villagers indicate their desire for unanimous rather than contested elections.

* Research from time to time on the stage of involvement of the villagers in Panchayati Raj in the several areas of the country is needed as the programme progresses.

Woodstock Town Meeting

Manning Hawthorne

We publish below for the benefit of our readers a graphic account of how the entire adult population of WOODSTOCK, a New England Village of U.S.A., participates in a meeting and takes stock of the past achievements and failures of the civic administration of the town and votes on the budget for the coming year. This is somewhat analogous to the role our Gram Sabhas are expected to play in the context of Panchayati Raj.—Ed.



The Town Meeting Hall, Woodstock

EACH SPRING just before planting time, Woodstock, a New England village in U.S.A., holds its annual town meeting. A town meeting is what its name states,—a meeting of the whole town to put the affairs of the town in order for the coming year. It is, perhaps, the most democratic form of government to be found anywhere, since everyone—whether a registered voter or not—has the opportunity to have his say on the questions discussed and to do his best to sway the voters to his opinion.

In many New England villages, the town meeting opens early in the morning and lasts throughout the day. People bring their noonday meal, or the wives cook one in the basement of the town hall. The meeting adjourns while the town eats and resumes after lunch. Woodstock, however, holds its own meeting at night, because many of its people work during the day at nearby plants and factories.

MEETING PROCEDURE

Before the meeting, the three selectmen, who are elected annually to administer the town's affairs, and the town clerk prepare what is called the warrant, which lists the things the townspeople are to vote upon. A road might need repairs, or a new road might be needed. Funds may be required to make repairs on the town hall. The school may need new teachers. There may be a question of allowing the erection of a commercial building along the main highway, which adjacent residents wish to protest in the town meeting.

The town meeting is run by a moderator who is elected from the floor. The three selectment open the meeting and the senior of the trio calls for nominations. Usually a respected and elderly citizen, who is acquainted with

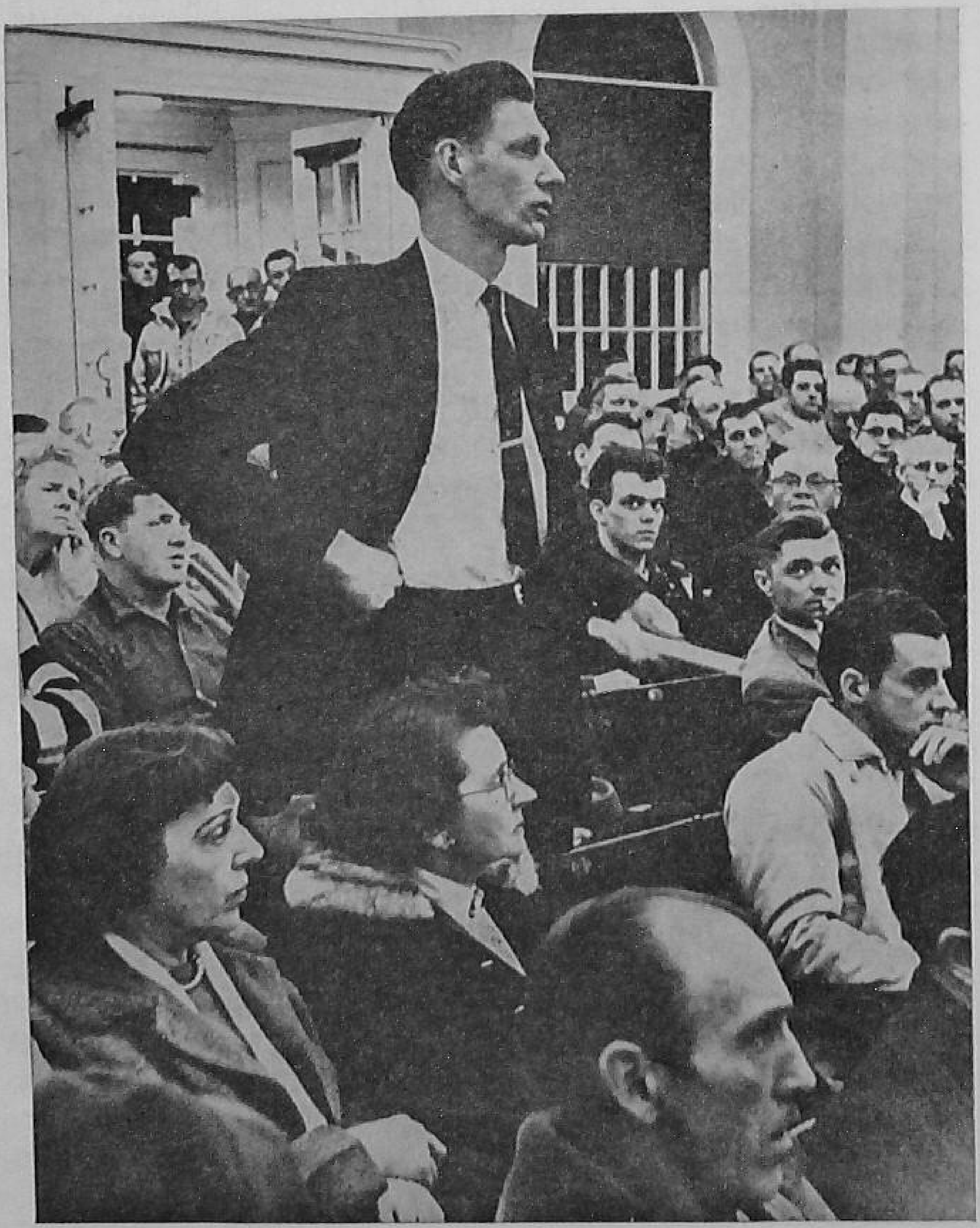
everyone in town, knows their temperaments, and who is firm enough to shut them off when their arguments grow prolonged and repetitious, is elected. Often he serves year after year. In Woodstock an apple-grower, who has lived all his life in the town and who can run a big, sometimes unruly, meeting like a charm and make no enemies doing so, has been elected moderator at each town meeting for some years.

The details of the warrant are published two or three weeks in advance in the local papers, so that everyone knows what is coming up at the meeting and is prepared to support or oppose the various issues. People come early and gather in little groups where they argue vehemently over the town's business.

There is a group that is always against everything, or so it appears to the younger voters of the town. This group is made up of elderly conservatives for the most part—opposed to spending any money. They are suspicious of new ideas and new additions to the town. They like to maintain things as they are.

Newcomers are viewed with suspicion by the old residents. They are regarded as foreigners who do not know what they are talking about.

A citizen rises to question an item



THE PERSONAL TOUCH

Everyone knows everyone else in the Woodstock town meeting—well enough to call each other by first names. There is no special respect paid to social status, to elected officials, or to any sort of rank.

The meeting might open its business with an item calling for a thousand dollars to repair the snow ploughs after a winter of hard usage. Sam Davis, the senior selectman, gets up and explains that the severe winter has made these repairs necessary, that bids have been called for, and that $ 1,000 was the lowest offer. But before he can make a motion that the bid be accepted, a lady of seventy years jumps up, her eyes snapping. The moderator recognizes her.

"Sam Davis," she starts, "you don't know a durned thing about machinery. When you were a boy in my fourth grade class, you couldn't add two and two. I wouldn't trust for a minute your ideas about what needs to be done. Furthermore, I am here to say that the ploughs only got up my road three times the whole winter, and I was isolated, that's what I was? It appears to

me what we need is new ploughs, not these old things that are always breaking down and leaving folks without any service! I move that we sell these old ploughs and buy some new up-to-date ones. Well we had these for twenty years!"

The moderator says, "Do I hear a second to Mary Martin's motion?" Someone, whose road has also not been ploughed, gets up and seconds the motion. Discussion on the question begins.

Sam Davis, in complete good humour, despite the rather personal remarks of his old teacher about his ability, gives cogent reasons why it is not feasible to buy new ploughs this year and points out to Miss Martin that her road was condemned some time ago as she had declared it was a private road—her road—and that she didn't want any macadam surface on it. And one of the laws of the town was that private roads were the concern of their owners.

So the argument usually continues, heavily interlarded with personal remarks about the past history, mental capabilities and idiosyncrasies of the people involved. No one seems to bear a grudge over these personal remarks, and they certainly make town meetings lively and interesting. When the moderator feels that enough argument has been made and that people are ready for a vote, he calls for a show of hands.

At the end of open debate on the issue, the town moderator, as on every issue, calls for a vote. The town clerk, who sits on the platform with him. verifies the moderator's count.

THE SCHOOL

Whenever the question of schools arises, there is certain to be great deal of argument. The budget of the schools is prepared by the school board, a committee of citizens elected annually. It is composed of an equal number from both major political parties, plus a chairman. The school board usually consists of men and women who know something about education. There may be one who was formerly a teacher in a college. Another may have a graduate degree or two. A woman member might be a former teacher. One or two successful and respected farmers complete the board, their traditional conservatism being expected to keep the educators and the educated from running wild.

Since the town supports its schools, pays teachers' salaries, maintains the school buildings from taxes collected in the community, the money spent on schools is a vital issue at town meeting.

When an item announces that the board wants two additional teachers and a general twenty per cent raise in all teachers' salaries, cries of anguish and horror rise from certain parts of the hall, yells of assent from others.

The moderator recognizes Mary Martin again. She was a teacher for many years. She has a sharp and lively wit. She and the old apple-grower were schoolmates many years ago. He knows the town loves to listen to Mary Martin. She stands a moment, an erect old lady, and waits while the hall quiets downs.

"Times are certainly changing," she begins, shaking her white head sorrowfully. "I taught in this town for forty years—taught most of you here, I must say. Grand-

(*Continued on page* 14)

PANCHAYAT THAT EARNED NOT BEGGED

NIGDU PANCHAYAT in the Nilokheri Development Block in the Punjab offers a promising example of how development work may be expanded by relying on the internal resources in men and money rather than on any outside help. As a result of the various earnest efforts made by it, the annual income today stands at about Rs. 7,000 with a balance of Rs. 24,000 to its credit.

COMMUNITY INTEGRATION

The village is situated along the Nilokheri Karsa Road. It has a population of about 2,500 people most of whom are refugees from Pakistan settled there. With the influx of the refugees, the entire complexion and social atmosphere of the village has undergone a transformation. The village of the prepartition days stands but in name only. There has been a marked give and take in the languages, social customs, habits and even dress of the new comers as well as the local people. This process of integration is still at work in the Community.

HOUSE TAX

Thanks to the inspiring and imaginative leadership of its Sarpanch, the village Panchayat realised early that if it was to work effectively it must quickly build up its own financial resources. With that end in view, it tapped the various remunerative sources. Unlike other Panchayats, it did not hesitate to levy tax on the villagers although such a step, it was feared by some, would bring it into disrepute. To start with, only house-tax was levied.

OTHER RESOURCES

Not content with the small income of house-tax, the Panchayat set out to build remunerative assets to ensure permanent income. It turned its attention to the development of the village pasture and introduced the system of licensed grazing. This not only brought indiscriminate grazing under control but yielded an income of about Rs. 1,300 per year. There are a number of ponds, and lot of water-logged areas where the lotus flower grows wild and in abundance. The lotus, being a commodity much in demand in the nearby market, has proved a good source of income. It has brought more than Rs. 1,000 a year. Various ponds have been stocked with fish and these too have yielded a rich harvest.

The subsoil water in the locality is saline—bearing a sprinkling of salt peter. Its lease brought an income of about Rs. 700 annually. The skinning of dead animals was previously done by Harijans of the locality free of any charge. However, the Harijans began to fight shy of their traditional occupation. And so the Panchayat thought it desirable to lease out the right of skinning to the highest bidder. This brought an annual income of Rs. 500. Thus in more than one way, the Panchayat fortified its financial position on a sound footing.

It is primarily because of its strong economic position, that the Panchayat has been able to carry out successfully a number of welfare activities in the village. It has built a school building at a cost of Rs. 8,000. It has also paved the streets and provided drains in the village.

VOLUNTARY EFFORTS

The Panchayat has succeeded in a large measure in mobilising villager's voluntary efforts in accomplishing several local works of vital importance to the community. The villagers, for instance, have built more than 5 miles of Kacha roads. A drain 5 miles in length, 12 ft. wide at the top and 8 ft. at the bottom was dug to clear out water from a large water-logged area. This resulted in the reclamation of 1,560 acres which was brought under the plough after a long time. The total value of people's contribution has exceeded Rs. 18,600. Indeed many of our Panchayats may have a lesson to learn from NIGDU Panchayat in developing their internal resources in men and money.

THESE MOTHER-IN-LAWS !

THE HARSHNESS, conservatism and rigidity that a monther-in-law usually displays towards the newly wed brides in a joint Hindu family is proverbial. But it is little known that they are equally averse to the new agents of change of the C.D. programme as well. However, the Gram Sevika of village Ichawar in Madhya Pradesh knew it better. This is the story of her triumph over the mother-in-law of Shanta Bai, a young housewife.

Shanta Bai felt very much interested in whatever projects the Gram Sevika suggested for home improvement. In a meeting of the Mahila Mandal, which Shanta Bai attended, there was a discussion on some labour saving devices, like the ball-bearing chakki, hay box, smokeless chulha and improvised steam cookers. Shanta Bai felt very enthusiastic about ball-bearing chakki and the hay box. She invited the Gram Sevika to her house to advise her on the ball-bearing chakki and how to make a hay box out of an old wooden box which was lying neglected in a corner of her house.

When the worker visited her home, Shanta's mother-in-law, an old lady, put her foot down on any proposal for a new chakki. She said that the traditional chakki or chulha was good enough for her house. When the worker tried to reason with her, saying that it was economic in time and energy, the lady was furious. She said she abhorred the idea of her daughter-in-law having free time to gossip around with her friends. She strongly advised the Gram Sevika to keep her crazy ideas to herself and have the sense not to meddle with other people's chakkis or chulhas. The subject was naturally dropped for the time being.

THE OPPORTUNITY

After a few days the Gram Sevika happened to be in the village and she thought of visiting Shanta's family. She found only Shanta's mother-in-law at home. The old lady had a bad cold with a nasty cough. When the Gram Sevika sympathised with her condition she grumbled that her daughter-in-law remained so busy in household work all the time that she never could find time to attend to her. On the contrary the old lady, even in her sickness, had to look after her grand children from her sick bed.

The Gram Sevika saw her opportunity in this. After assuring the old lady that she will be alright soon and that she will tell her daughter-in-law to look after her well, she left her. On the way back she met Shanta Bai and in a brief time they agreed to help the old lady in their own way.

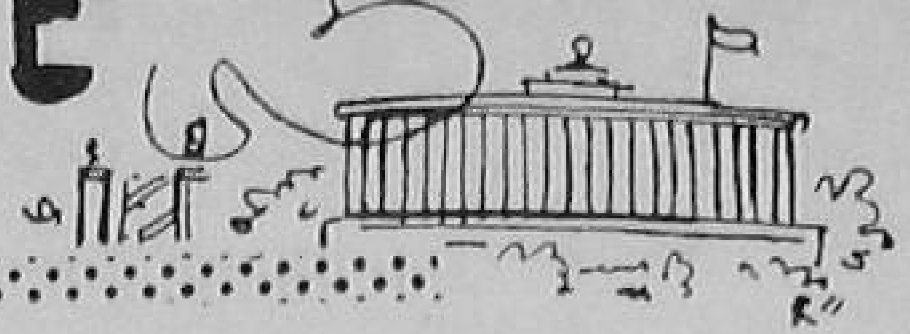
That very evening the Gram Sevika, with the help of a friend, carried her ball-bearing chakki and hay box which she always kept with her for demonstration purposes, to Shanta Bai's house. She explained to Shanta how the chakki and the hay box worked. To Shanta's great surprise, grinding wheat, sweeping, cleaning and part of the cooking was finished within an hour. It took her only one third of the normal time to grind wheat on ball-bearing chakki. Then she quickly swept the floor. After that she boiled dal for 15 minutes and when it was only half cooked she removed it from fire and put it in the hay box. The Gram Sevika had explained to her that the dal will be cooked automatically by the heat conserved in the hay box and will keep hot till lunch time.

CHANGED VIEWS

Now Shanta got enough time to look after her mother-in-law. After a few days the old lady felt she could leave her sick bed. The Gram Sevika was there to felicitate her on her recovery. The old lady was profuse in praise of Shanta Bai who had looked after the household work and attended to her, too. And even

(*Continued on page* 12)

FROM THE CENTRE



SARVA SEVA SANGH AND C.D. PROGRAMME

THE MINISTRY of Community Development and Co-operation had a Conference with the representatives of the Akhil Bhartiya Sarva Seva Sangh to discuss the role of the Sangh in promoting Panchayati Raj. It was decided that the Sangh could undertake with advantage activities like promotion of Panchayati Raj through Lok Shiksha, institutional and peripatetic training of non-official members of Panchayati Raj institutions, assistance to Orientation and Study Centres and guest lecturers, participation in seminars on the philosophy of Community Development and Panchayati Raj, research and evaluation of the programme of Panchayati Raj and concrete programmes of works in the various sectors of the Community Development programme. It was also decided that a joint programme be worked out with the Sangh in eleven pilot projects in various states. A Committee will be constituted at the Union level to review the working of these pilot projects as also to promote the other decisions taken at the Conference. Similar Committees will be established at the State level also.

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STUDY GROUP ON NYAYA PANCHAYATS

The Study Group on Nyaya Panchayats set up by the Union Ministry of Law has already visited most of the States and is expected to complete its work by December, 1961.

* * * *

BLOCK JEEPS AND ELECTIONS

The Government of India has requested the State Governments to ensure that there is no misuse of C.D. Block jeeps for political and election work. In a communication addressed in this connection to the Chief Secretaries of all State Governments, it has been pointed out that with the progress of decentralisation and transfer of Block resources to elected representatives who may have political affiliations, it has become absolutely essential to exercise all care in preventing such misuse of vehicles. The office-bearers of Panchayati Raj institutions—Pramukhs and Pradhans—are expected to establish healthy conventions in this respect. Non-official functionaries are to be requested to keep their official tours in course of duty distinct from their electioneering work and have been reminded that the use of block vehicles is to be restricted strictly to official purposes. It has been urged that these functionaries should not combine official and election work while touring in Government jeeps. The procedure outlined above is to apply equally when running costs like purchase of petrol, providing a driver, etc., are to be met by the functionaries themselves.

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PANCHAYATI RAJ TRAINING CENTRES

With a view to strengthen Panchayats and to make Panchayati Raj effective, the Ministry of Community Development and Co-operation has requested the State Governments to take up the training programme for Panches (Members of the Village Panchayats), Sarpanches (Presidents of the Village Panchayats), Up-Sarpanches (Vice-Presidents of Village Panchayats) and members of Block Development Committees/Panchayat Samitis separately. The question of co-ordinating and integrating the entire training programme for the non-official functionaries of Panchayati Raj had been under consideration of the Central Government for some time. A detailed scheme envisaging the setting up of District Insti-

tutes for training for non-officials has been evolved. At present, 50 Panchayati Raj Training Centres are proposed to be set up during the current financial year, and another 50 during the next financial year. The statewise allotment of the centres is as follows: Andhra Pradesh 4, Assam 1, Bihar 5, Gujarat 2, Jammu & Kashmir 1, Kerala 1, Madras 3, Madhya Pradesh 4, Mysore 3, Maharashtra 4, Orissa 4, Punjab 3, Rajasthan 3, Uttar Pradesh 9, West Bengal 2 and Himachal Pradesh 1.

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PRIZE COMPETITION SCHEME FOR GRAM SAHAYAKS

The Ministry of Community Development & Co-operation has evolved a prize competition scheme with a view to encourage Gram Sahayaks. In recent years, considerable use has been made of progressive farmers known as "Gram Sahayaks" in enlarging the benefits of this work to a larger section of the community. By adopting improved agricultural practices the advanced farmers have not only derived benefit therefrom but also set an example for other fellow farmers in the surrounding areas. Under this scheme, it is proposed to award prizes to the best Gram Sahayaks at Block and District levels in the form of certificates/medals etc. In addition, the prize winning Gram Sahayaks at the District level would be taken on a special study tour for visiting blocks etc. in various States at the end of which they would meet at some convenient place in a three-day seminar to discuss and work out further improvements in the agricultural development programme to be implemented by them. The cost involved on such a tour is estimated at Rs. 250 per Gram Sahayak per year.

The selection of Gram Sahayaks would be done on the basis of achievement primarily in the field of agricultural extension work with special reference to the adoption of improved agricultural practices by the Gram Sahayaks on their own lands; and the extent to which spread of agricultural improvements have taken place at the instance of or with the help of the Gram Sahayaks.

Each Panchayat will select the best Gram Sahayak for its area. At the block level a committee consisting of the Chairman of the Block Panchayat Samiti/B.D.C. and two or three other members of the Block Development Committee/Panchayat Samiti would select the best Gram Sahayak out of the best Gram Sahayaks selected by the Panchayats. The committee may obtain assistance they need from the B.D.O., Agr. Extension Officer and other staff in this regard. The B.D.O. may be the Secretary of the Committee. Similary at the District level, a group of five judges consisting of a local M.L.A., M.P., Pramukh or a Pradhan together with such other non-official representatives as the State Government/Zila Parishad may consider appropriate would select the best Gram Sahayak for the District.

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PROMOTION OF CO-OPERATIVE FARMING

Nearly 60 selected village level workers who are to be put incharge of co-operative farming societies in pilot project areas have gone through a 15-day orientation course, at Nilokheri. They will hold charge till trained Secretaries are available. Efforts have been made during the recent past to encourage the setting up of co-operative farming societies. About 50 farming societies have been organised by October 2 and 300 societies will be organised by March 31, 1962.

THESE MOTHER-IN-LAWS

(*Continued from page* 10)

the small children were looked after by their mother.

The Gram Sevika expressed her happiness at the mother-in-law's changed views about her daughter-in-law. She said that now that Shanta had not to attend to her mother-in-law, she wanted her permission to take away her chakki and hay box, which she apologised for having placed at Shanta's disposal against the old lady's known views about them. This left the mother-in-law gaping. She never imagined that it were the new devices —the ball-bearing chakki and the hay box that had helped Shanta to find enough time to attend to her. How could she now allow these to be carried out of the house? She therefore, relented. And the Gram Sevika had her way.

COMMUNITY ON THE MOVE

POLICE VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

In Madras under the Police Village Development Scheme the Police enters villages not with rifles and lathis, but with altogether new weapons consisting of crowbars, pick-axes and spades. They enlist the villagers' cooperation in an effort to improve the village and give it a new look. And when their job is finished the village does wear a new look on account of the improvements accomplished in the village roads, houses, schools, etc. The work by the police under this scheme presents the policeman in a new role.

In Gourikulam and Jabbarkhan villages in Chingleput district, laying of a road (about a furlong) was taken up and completed. In South Arcot district, a six-furlong road was completed in Salai Agaram village. A kacha road of one mile was completed in two villages *viz.*, Melpathy and Arichanpalayam. Digging of a well and construction of a Children's Park were completed in Kudiraichandal villages. In Thanjavur district, the laying of a road of about five furlongs was taken up in the Manakudy village and completed.

In Tiruchirappalli district, the construction of a gravel road of $2\frac{1}{2}$ furlongs was completed in the Pudur Uthamanur village. The formation of a playground, construction of a community hall and drainage are in progress and are likely to be completed this year.

In Mandarampudur Agatees waram village in Kanyakumari district the construction of a community hall was completed with the help of contributions received from the public.

* * *

TRIBALS BUILD SCHOOLS

In Madhya Pradesh the upcoming Primary buildings in villages Chainpur and Murli and the completed primary school building in village Uttarda in Bilaspur district are a living example of the fact that the idea of 'Shramdan' and progress through people's own efforts has caught the fancy of the Tribals living in the interior and remote parts of the district.

Village Chainpur, about 17 miles away from Pali in Bilaspur district, has a population of about 700 people. The children of the village used to study at a place which could, by no standard, be called a school building. Hence the village people decided to construct a pucca school building for their children. The work was started last year and the building is expected to be completed soon. The cost of the buliding is estimated at Rs. 8,000 and this expenditure has been borne entirely by the village people.

Similarly, the people of village Murli also decided to construct a Pucca school building through 'Shramdan.' Unaided they started their work which is nearing completion now. The cost of the building is estimated at Rs. 7,000. The people of village Uttarda went a step forward. They had already constructed a middle school building and a hostel without any aid from outside. They decided to construct a pucca primary school building also. The Sarpanch of the village Shri Mathura Prasad along with his other associates took up the lead and started collections in cash and kind and mobilising 'Shramdan'. Consequently, a hall of 12′×35′ in area with 8 feet wide verandah around has been constructed by the village people. The total cost of the work is estimated at Rs. 10,000.

* * *

VETERINARY DISPENSARY AND MATERNITY HOME

Residents of Batki village in the Saraipali Development Block of Raipur district in a Madhya Pradesh have set an inspiring example of 'Shramdan' by constructing a Veterinary Dispensary at a cost of Rs. 6,000 without any Government grant. A local Nistar tank has also been renovated by the people through 'Shramdan' valued at Rs. 1,000. In addition to this, the villagers have constructed a maternity home through 'Shramdan'. The cost of this building is estimated at Rs. 2,000 out of which the Block has contributed a sum of Rs. 250 only.

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EMBANKMENT REPAIRED BY VILLAGERS

The agricultural embankment along the Mora Pagladia and Buradia rivers from Barpit Bhojkuchi to Kendubari in Assam was repaired purely on a voluntary basis by about 300 villagers of Bhojkuchi, Balabari and Kendubari. The embankment is expected to save about 7,000 acres of agricultural land from inundation of the two rivers.

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ROAD, DAM AND LIBRARIES THROUGH SELF-HELP

The people of Rajapathar area in Howraghat C.D. Block, Mikir Hills in Assam constructed on self-help basis a five-mile-long road and a big dam at the Hatikati river. The money allotted for construction of this road, dam and canal thus saved, has been utilized in another nation building work in the locality. They have built up a few libraries and managed to have nice collection of books therein.

*　*　*

EVERY FAMILY HAS A KITCHEN GARDEN

The village of Chaili Khan in the Simla C.D. Block, takes pride for having installed a water supply system for its 16 families with 162 members. The water tank, which was constructed with people's contribution of Rs. 1,100 and an equal grant from the Government supplies water to all the families in the village. The villagers have built, entirely through *shramdan*, a 9-furlong road to connect Summer Hill with the village. The villagers have also constructed a school building, with a contribution of Rs. 2,100 of their own and a similar amount from the Government. A school teacher's quarter too has been constructed. The village has registered improvement in the field of agricultural production also. The increase in the yield of potato in the village has been substantial.

All the 16 families in the village, incidentally, have now compost pits of their own, and use improved seeds supplied by the model farm set up in this village. The village has now been selected for the wholesale replacement of agricultural implements. The programme of horticulture has also made progress. As many as 2,160 fruit saplings have been planted. Every farmer has started a kitchen garden for the family.

WOODSTOCK TOWN MEETING

(*Continued from page* 8)

parents, parents and children. Year in, year out, I taught eight grades in one room. I went early, shovelled away the snow, made a fire in the stove, swept out the room, and taught all of you. It wasn't easy, I admit, because most of you were not what I would call scholars. And I did it for $300 a year at my top earnings!

"Now what do we have today! A teacher comes to a heated school. A janitor keeps the fires, cleans the rooms and keeps the road open. A teacher today has one class, not eight. She drives up to school in her nice car! For forty years I walked! With all these benefits, and no work to speak of, she gets ten times my salary! And the board wants to give her more and hire two more teachers as well!

"Another thing. Teachers today get a pension. I got no pension. I saved my money and now I am asked to spend it for higher pay for the teachers we've got and for more teachers to help all those we've got, so they'll do less to earn their money than they do now. Now most of you came to school to me and you know I mean what

(*Continued on page* 16)

Around the States

MAHARASHTRA

PANCHAYAT LEGISLATION

The Maharashtra Decentralisation (Of Powers and Functions to District Councils) Bill, 1961, has been referred to a Select Committee.

* * *

MADHYA PRADESH

GRAM SABHAS

In Madhya Pradesh, Collectors have been asked to formulate proposals for the establishment of Gram Sabhas under the new Bill.

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MADRAS

STUDY TRAINING COURSE

Government of Madras have decided that a five-day study training course in the Madras Panchayat Act, 1958 should be organised for B.D.Os. as part of their training programme. The State Government have also decided that inservice training in 'Panchayats' in addition to the inservice training in 'Agriculture and Co-operation' being imparted at present, should be arranged for Gram Sevaks by the Divisional Panchayat Officers periodically with the assistance of the Block Panchayat Officers.

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PANCHAYAT RADIO MAINTENANCE ORGANISATION

The Madras Government have set up a new organisation called "Panchayat Radio Maintenance Organisation" in place of the existing State Broadcasting Department. The new organisation will be incharge of maintenance of radio sets installed in Panchayats, maintenance of cinema trailor units and other equipment supplied under the C.D. Programme, installing new radio receiver sets and covering all Panchayats with radio service during the Third Plan.

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MYSORE

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

In Mysore, the Taluk Boards and Panchayats have been advised that as the basic object of the Panchayati Raj is to promote self-help and self-reliance, they should insist on public participation and contribution in cash or kind or labour in respect of all development works undertaken by them from their own funds.

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C.D. OFFICIALS AND PANCHAYATS

In Mysore, detailed instructions have been issued in regard to the involvement of the officers from the Village Level Worker upwards in the work of the Panchayats and Taluk Boards and the assistance and guidance expected by the State Government in the work of the Panchayati Raj from these officers.

* * *

UTTAR PRADESH

PANCHAYAT RAJ ACT

Two significant amendments have been made in the Uttar Pradesh Panchayat Raj Act 1947. Under the first amendment the Gaon Panchayat is authorised to call upon male adults between the ages of 21 to 45 years to contribute voluntary free labour for community works not exceeding 96 hours in a year from a person. In default of contribution of labour a person will have to contribute cash equivalent of the value of the labour. The second amendment is to the effect that the Gaon Panchayats may make contribution from their funds for institutions, organisations, and functions of common interest if such contributions are authorised by the State Government.

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TWO SAMMELANS

Two Sammelans, each of 10 days' duration, of Presidents and Executive Officers of Antarim Zila Parishads were held at Lucknow in August and September, 1961.

* * *

PUNJAB

PANCHAYAT ELECTIONS & TRAINING

In Punjab, elections to Panchayat Samitis have been completed and Panchayati Raj inaugurated on the 2nd October. The first phase of Panchayati Raj training programme concluded successfully on June 15, in which 1,299 selected Sarpanches (6 from each Block) and 914 officials took part. The second phase of the programme started on the 30th July and ended on the 5th August, in which all the Panches and Sarpanches besides Block and Village Level Officers received training in 228 camps at the rate of one per Block. The third phase of training in which the newly elected members, Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of Panchayat Samitis and Zila Parishads will participate is expected to start in November, 1961, and conclude by the end of January, 1962.

* * *

UNOPPOSED ELECTIONS

In Panchayats where Panches and Sarpanches have all been elected unopposed, the land revenue for one year for the Panchayat area concerned will be sanctioned as a grant to the Panchayat for local development works. Where either the Sarpanch or the Panches have been returned unopposed 33% of the land revenue for one year will be given to the Panchayat.

* * *

RAJASTHAN

ENCOURAGING UNANIMITY IN PANCHAYAT

Before the elections to the Panchayats in December, 1960, the State Government notified that Panchayats whose Sarpanch and 80% of Panches are returned unanimously would be given a special grant of 25 nP. per head of its population for the full term of its life in addition to the usual grant-in-aid. 27.2% of the total number of Panchayats registered unanimous elections and qualified for this additional grant.

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HIMACHAL PRADESH

POWER OF B.D.Os.

In Himachal Pradesh, B.D.Os. have been made the drawing and disbursing officers for Panchayat Department funds.

* * *

WOODSTOCK TOWN MEETING

(*Continued from page 14*)

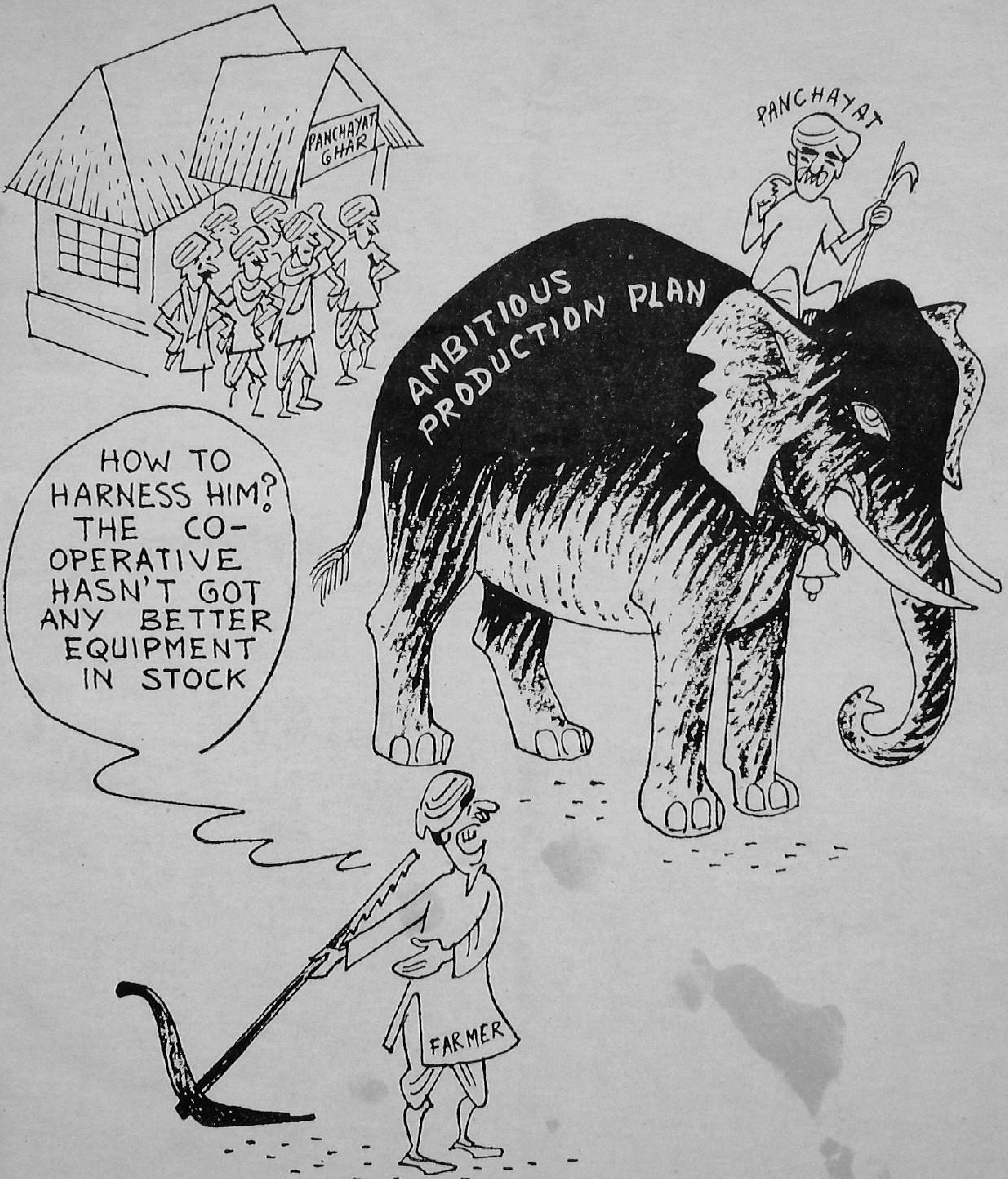
I say. And I tell you this plan is outrageous and unreasonable and is just one more way to get money from us taxpayers. I'm against it !"

And Mary Martin sits down to applause from both those who agree with her and those who do not. Although she has said nothing about the rising costs of living, nothing about the great increase in the number of school children in the village, her argument does have some effect. After an hour of discussion which sometimes rises to heights of sarcasm and wrath, the town votes a ten per cent raise of salaries for teachers, and the addition of one of the staff.

The Board of Education, in spite of its partial defeat, seems quite pleased. As a matter of fact, the board knows the villagers too. It knew Mary Martin and others would object, no matter what proposals it made. It knew that never does the school board get all it asks. The teachers are fairly well paid, but to keep them on a par with other communities, the board needed a five per cent raise. One additional teacher was essential. So members of the board asked for a raise four times what they felt must be awarded, and for twice as many teachers as the school must have. They got more than the minimum raise, which meant none would be needed the following year. They got the teacher they needed. The town was pleased because it had exercised its right to cut the appropriation sought by the board. Everyone was happy, even Mary Martin. She knew what the school board needed and what it would get. She hasn't been going to town meetings for half a century without learning all about them. She knows too, that the town loves to hear her argue and protest. She's been rapping youthful knuckles all her life, and they want her to cotinue.

By courtesy—SPAN

Call for Cooperation



Under the C.D. Programme, Mahila Mandals and their welfare centres have been organised in a number of villages. At these centres, women are taught several handicrafts like tailoring and embroidery. The rural house-wives and young unmarried girls learn these crafts with great advantage.

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